

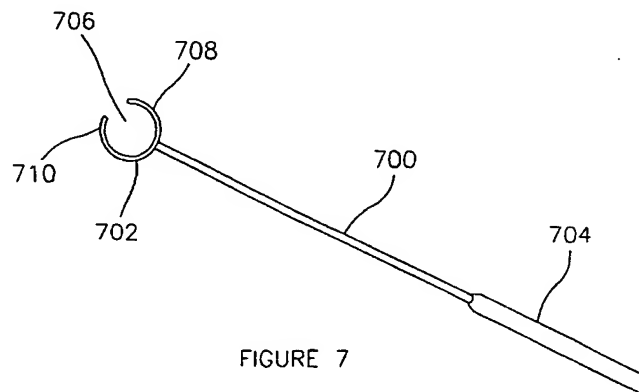
REMARKS

The above-referenced application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated January 17, 2007. By the present amendment, the Applicant has amended claims 1, 3, 5, and 7. It is respectfully submitted that the claims pending in the application, namely claims 1-10 and 12-15, do not introduce new subject matter, are fully supported by the application, and are patentable over the prior art. Prompt and favorable consideration of these claims is earnestly sought.

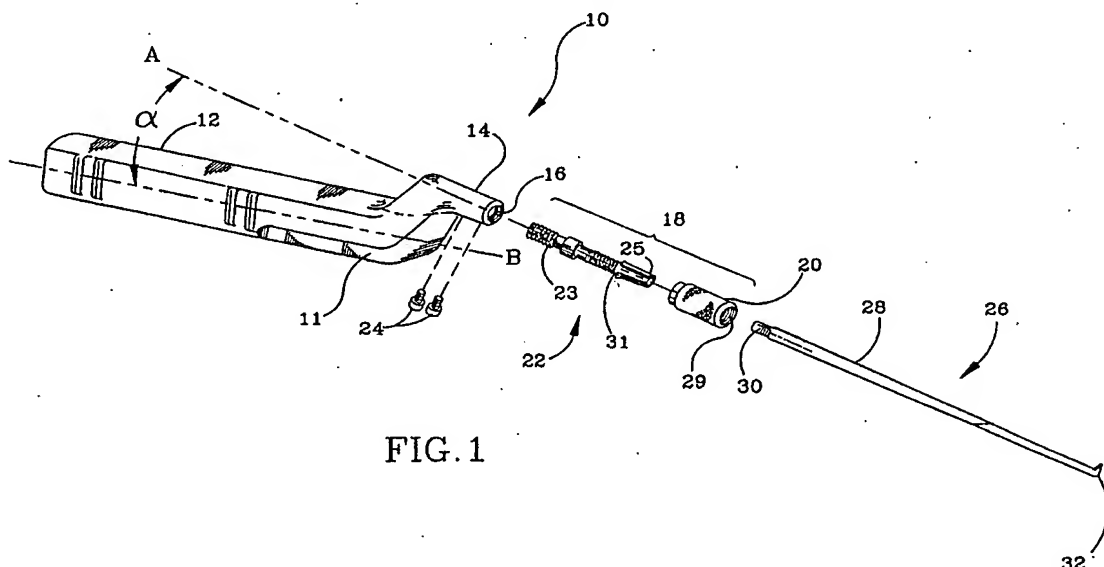
The Office Action rejected claims 1-15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,591,183 to Chin (hereinafter "Chin") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,423,842 to Michelson (hereinafter "Michelson"). The Office Action asserted that Chin discloses a method including providing a long slender rod having a handle that is substantially coaxial therewith, and a segment located at the distal end of the rod including a first and second sideways hooks extending from the rod in opposing directions, manipulating the rod to slide the sideways hooks around the artery, and pushing and/or pulling the rod to slide along the artery until the artery is separated from the surrounding tissue. As acknowledged in the Office Action, Chin fails to disclose a segment of the slender rod offsetting the hook from a longitudinal axis defined by the rod. The Office Action relied on Michelson, however, for disclosing a long slender rod with a handle on one end, a sideways hook on the other end, and a segment of the slender rod offsetting the hook from a longitudinal axis defined by the rod.

As currently amended, independent claims 1, 3, 5, and 7 recite a method including, *inter alia*, the step of providing an instrument having a long slender rod and a handle, where the rod includes first and second segments, "the first segment and the second segment defining an obtuse angle therebetween".

It is respectfully submitted that Chin in view of Michelson fails to disclose or suggest the method recited in amended independent claims 1, 3, 5, and 7. Whereas the rod recited in amended independent claims 1, 3, 5, and 7 includes first and second segments defining an obtuse angle therebetween, Chin discloses a dissection instrument 700 having an open ring 702 attached to a rigid shaft or handle 704 composed of a single segment that defines a single longitudinal axis, as seen below in FIG. 7. (See col. 8, lines 1-4).



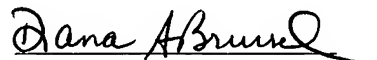
Moreover, Michelson discloses a rod 28 attached to a handle 12 and an attachment assembly 14 that offsets the axis of the rod 28 from that of the handle 12, as seen below in FIG. 1, (emphasis added), in contrast with the rod that includes two segments defining an obtuse angle therebetween, as recited in amended claims 1, 3, 5, and 7.



Accordingly, for at least the reasons discussed above, it is respectfully submitted that Chin in view of Michelson fails to disclose or suggest each and every limitation recited in each of amended independent claims 1, 3, 5, and 7, and therefore, that amended claims 1, 3, 5, and 7 are in condition for allowance. As claims 2, 4, 6, 8-10, and 12-15 depend, directly or indirectly, from claims 1, 3, 5, and 7, it is respectfully submitted that these claims are also in condition for allowance.

Prompt and favorable action on these claims is earnestly requested. Should the Examiner desire a telephonic interview to resolve any outstanding matters, the Examiner is sincerely invited to contact the undersigned at (631) 501-5713.

Respectfully submitted,


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